DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 436 042 EC 307 505

TITLE	Communication Access and Quality Education for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Children. The Report of the California Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Education Advisory Task Force.
INSTITUTION	California State Dept. of Education, Sacramento.
PUB DATE	1999-09-00
NOTE	37p.
AVAILABLE FROM	California Department of Education, 721 Capitol Mall, P.O. Box 944272, Sacramento, CA 94244-2720.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Academic Standards; *Access to Education; *Accountability; *Deafness; Elementary Secondary Education; Evaluation Criteria; *Financial Support; *Hearing Impairments; Outcomes of Education; Parent Participation; *Regional Programs; State Programs
IDENTIFIERS	*California

ABSTRACT

This report from a California task force provides recommendations to improve the quality of education for the approximately 11,000 students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing in California. It begins by discussing the educational barriers faced by students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing, including the significance of regional programs and then highlights six recommendacions. These include: (1) California should implement a coordinated, statewide, regional education delivery system for students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing; (2) criteria for quality deaf and hard-of hearing programs should be implemented; (3) programs servicing children who are deaf or hard-of-hearing should have standards, assessment, and accountability for student achievement; (4) the California Department of Education, institutions of higher education, the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, and other agencies should collaborate to recruit and train staff; (5) a system of parent and community education and involvement should be established; and (6) the current funding system should be modified to provide sufficient resources for a quality education for students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing. Appendices include a concurrent resolution passed by the California assembly addressing the development and evaluation of pilot programs for pupils with low incidence disabilities, and findings from a study on the education of students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing. (CR)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 436 042

EC

The Report of the California Deaf and Hard-of-hearing Education Advisory Task Force

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY, HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
C. Robinson
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC).
2A

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

California Department of Education Sacramento, 1999

EC 307505

Communication Access and Quality Education for Deaf and Hard-of-hearing Children

The Report of the California Deaf and Hard-of-hearing Education Advisory Task Force

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Publishing Information

Communication Access and Quality Education for Deaf and Hard-of-hearing Children is the report of the California Deaf and Hard-of-hearing Education Advisory Task Force. It was published by the California Department of Education, 721 Capitol Mall, Sacramento, California (mailing address: P.O. Box 944272, Sacramento, CA 94244-2720). It was distributed under the provisions of the Library Distribution Act and *Government Code* Section 11096.

© 1999 by the California Department of Education
All rights reserved

Prepared for publication by CSEA members

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Contents

Message from the State Superintendent of Public Instruction ..... *v*

Acknowledgments ..... *vii*

Introduction *1*

Recommendations

I. California should implement a coordinated, statewide, regional education delivery system for deaf and hard-of-hearing students *5*

II. Criteria for quality deaf and hard-of-hearing programs should be implemented *12*

III. Programs serving deaf and hard-of-hearing children should have standards, assessment, and accountability for student achievement *15*

IV. The California Department of Education, institutions of higher education, the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, and other agencies should collaborate to recruit and train staff *16*

V. A system of parent and community education and involvement should be established *18*

VI. The current funding system should be modified and provide sufficient resources for a quality education for deaf and hard-of-hearing students *19*

Call to Action *21*

Appendixes

Appendix A: Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 55 ..... *25*

Appendix B: Excerpt from *Regionalization for Students with Low Incidence Disabilities* *27*

Message
from the State Superintendent of Public Instruction

WHEN talking about deaf and hard-of-hearing students, the Reverend Jesse Jackson once said, "The problem is not that the students do not hear. The problem is that the hearing world does not listen."

This observation remains all too true, and we must do a better job of listening to our deaf and hard-of-hearing communities. They are telling us that California is failing to provide deaf and hard-of-hearing students with the education they deserve.

To address this problem, I established the California Advisory Task Force on Deaf and Hard-of-hearing Education in 1996. I asked the group, comprised of members of the deaf and hard-of-hearing communities, educators, advocates, and parents, to develop recommendations to improve the quality of education for the approximately 11,000 deaf and hard-of-hearing students in this state.

I first became acutely aware of the problems of deaf and hard-of-hearing students when I was an Assemblymember in the State Legislature. My district included Fremont, where a California School for the Deaf campus is located. As a result I became well acquainted with many members of the deaf and hard-of-hearing community.

Based on what I learned from them, I authored a series of bills designed to support deaf children; these efforts culminated in Assembly Bill 1836, which was enacted in 1994 and is now commonly referred to as the "Deaf Child's Bill of Rights." This legislation recognizes the importance of providing deaf and hard-of-hearing

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

children with a variety of educational options designed to meet their unique communication needs.

Communication is central to the needs of all students; without communication, it is impossible to achieve literacy. Jerome D. Schein, Professor of Deafness Studies, noted, "Literacy is not a gift bestowed upon a few by a charitable body; it, too, is a right of all citizens of this democracy. Since we equate literacy with education, and since the government provides education for its citizens, it must do so equally for deaf citizens."

However, too many of our deaf and hard-of-hearing students lack the necessary communication skills, causing them to fall further and further behind in their literacy skills. Thus, these students are deprived of a quality education. It is disheartening that, on average, deaf and hard-of-hearing students will graduate from high school with less than a third-grade reading level, and only eight percent of the students will graduate from college. We must change this situation immediately and ensure that these students have the opportunity to achieve at the same level as our other students.

I want to thank the task force for all its work on behalf of our deaf and hard-of-hearing students. I know that their job was a difficult one, and I greatly appreciate the many hours the members spent developing the following recommendations. It is now up to California's educators and policy makers to transform these recommendations into reality.

You have my commitment to share these thoughtful suggestions with a broad cross section of legislators, the governor's staff, the California State Board of Education, county and district administrators and their boards, the PTA, and early childhood organizations. I pledge to stand with deaf and hard-of-hearing children, their parents, and their advocates to bring these students the finest educational opportunities our state has to offer.

DELAINE EASTIN
State Superintendent of Public Instruction

Acknowledgments

THE CALIFORNIA Deaf and Hard-of-hearing Education Advisory Task Force acknowledges the many parents, educators, other professionals, and deaf and hard-of-hearing community members who have shared their experiences, concerns, and ideas regarding improving education for deaf and hard-of-hearing students in California. Clearly, the issues of communication access and quality education are a top priority for people in this state and throughout the nation. It is hoped that this report provides clear direction to the California Department of Education and other public agencies on how to improve the delivery of quality education to *all* deaf and hard-of-hearing students.

The task force owes a special acknowledgment to State Superintendent of Public Instruction **Delaine Eastin;** Director of the State Special Schools and Services Division **Dr. Ron Kadish;** and California Department of Education staff members for their unfailing support, encouragement, and counsel as the task force labored over many months to draft this report.

California Deaf and Hard-of-hearing Education Advisory Task Force Members

Sheri Farinha Mutti, Task Force Chair, Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing Consumer, and Director, Norcal Center on Deafness

Barbara MacNeil, Ph.D., Task Force Co-chair, Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Consumer, Lecturer, Educational Consultant, and Administrator, San Diego Unified School District

Peggy Tranovich, Task Force Co-chair, Parent and Board Member, Greater Los Angeles Council on Deafness

Jacob Arcanin, Administrator, California School for the Deaf, Fremont

Timothy Beatty, Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing Consumer and Administrator, California Department of Rehabilitation

David A. Bermann, Administrator, San Joaquin County Office of Education

Greg Kimberlin, Ph.D.

Carl J. Kirchner, Consultant

Paul Ogden, Ph.D. Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing Consumer and Professor, California State University, Fresno

Rebecca A. Piepho, Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing Consumer and Psychologist, California School for the Deaf, Riverside

Wilma Poage, Ed.D., Administrator, Lodi Unified School District

Robert Sidansky, Parent and Coordinator of Student Personnel Services at the National Center on Deafness, California State University, Northridge

Lawrence M. Siegel, Esq., Director, National Deaf Education Project, and Member, California Advisory Commission on Special Education

Ronald Stern, Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing Consumer, Parent, and Director of Instruction, California School for the Deaf, Fremont

Grace W. Tiessen, Hard-of-Hearing Consumer, Self-Help for Hard-of-Hearing People, Inc.

Catherine Walsh, Parent and Board Member, Independently Merging Parent Associations in California Together for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Children (IMPACT)

California Department of Education Staff Liaison to the Task Force

Dick Crow, Consultant, California Department of Education

Nancy Grosz Sager, Consultant, California Department of Education

Michi Lozano, Executive Secretary, California Department of Education

Janice Lowen Agee, Writer, California Department of Education

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Introduction

COMMUNICATION is at the heart of everything human beings do; it defines and gives meaning to our emotions, beliefs, hopes, creativity, and life experiences. Without communication, a child is lost. The effective development, understanding, and expression of language are fundamental to any educational experience and are particularly crucial for deaf and hard-of-hearing children.[1]

Communication and educational growth depend on a language-rich environment, one with ongoing, direct, and age-appropriate language opportunities. We take it for granted that hearing children will be in such an environment. Too often, the deaf or hard-of-hearing child sits alone in a classroom, unable to communicate effectively with peers and teachers.

Because of their unique communication needs, deaf and hard-of-hearing children are distinct from all other children with disabilities. Children with a learning handicap or an emotional disability can communicate with the world around them. While deaf and hard-of-hearing children may have effective modes of communication, they often do not have the opportunity for direct communication with others. This distinction is fundamental and separates deaf and hard-of-hearing children from others in the educational world.

[1] The term *deaf and hard-of-hearing* means children who have any degree of hearing loss, or a hearing loss in combination with one or more disabilities, which adversely affects educational performance. These children may also be gifted, learning disabled, developmentally delayed, severely emotionally disturbed, visually impaired, orthopedically impaired, or multihandicapped.

The unique and historic difficulties faced by deaf and hard-of-hearing children have been analyzed in detail, and recommendations have been made by national and state blue ribbon committees, task forces, commissions, and study groups. Unfortunately, little has changed to improve the education of deaf and heard-of-hearing students over decades.

The 1965 *Babbidge Committee Report*, published under the auspices of the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, reported on the problems in education for deaf persons. A 1967 statewide committee of educators and parents of deaf children recommended changes to the California State Superintendent of Public Instruction regarding the delivery of educational services to deaf children.

In 1988 the national Commission on Education of the Deaf (COED) published *Toward Equality* and reported to the President and Congress its "primary and inescapable conclusion" that the present status of education for deaf persons in the United States is unsatisfactory—"unacceptably so" (p. viii).

Not long after the issuance of the COED report, the California Department of Education (CDE) issued its Low Incidence Disability Advisory Committee (LIDAC) report *Low Incidence Disability Programs' "Quality Study" on Hearing Impaired Programs* (1989). LIDAC concluded that "local education agencies have had difficulty providing quality program and services" to deaf and hard-of-hearing students (p. 9).

In 1992 the California Assembly enacted Concurrent Resolution No. 55 (see Appendix A), which directed CDE, in cooperation with education agencies, organizations, and individuals, "to develop regionalized pilot programs for pupils with low incidence disabilities and to conduct a study on the effectiveness of those programs." That same year the U. S. Department of Education issued *Deaf Students Education Services; Policy Guidance*, which stressed the importance of a deaf or hard-of-hearing child's communication and linguistic needs in determining the least restrictive environment (*Federal Register*, October 30, 1992, p. 49274).

In 1994 the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) issued its comprehensive publication titled *Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Students' Educational Service Guidelines*, in which NASDSE concluded:

> Children who are deaf must have opportunities for natural language development through the visual channel and/or the auditory channel as early as possible. Children who are deaf and are not exposed to early language input are likely to have severe deficits that will have an impact on future learning and will require extensive intervention to facilitate language development (p. 9).

Considering that 30 years passed between the Babbidge and NASDSE reports, it is not surprising that the latter noted that "[t]he low academic achievement levels of children with hearing loss are well known both to legislators and educators" (p. 6).

Though statistics cannot adequately reflect the personal experience of isolation felt by many deaf and hard-of-hearing children, they are important indicators of a fundamentally inadequate education. The task force notes the following:

- On average, deaf and hard-of-hearing children graduate from high school with reading skills at grade 2.8—compared to tenth grade skills for hearing children. Between the ages of eight and eighteen, these children go from a reading level of grade 1.3 to 2.8 (*Patterns of Academic Achievements*, by T. E. Allen, as reported in *Toward Equality* [p. 18]).
- Only 8 percent of deaf and hard-of-hearing students will graduate from college (*Toward Equality*).
- The mean income of deaf adults is 40 percent to 60 percent of the income of their hearing counterparts (*Deaf People in California: Demographics and Communication Needs*, California Census Data Center, 1990).

- At least 35 percent of deaf adults in California are unemployed, and 90 percent are underemployed (*Access Creates Opportunity: The Deaf in California.* A report to the Governor and the Legislature. 1997).
- Deaf and hard-of-hearing adults have higher rates of health-related problems, drug and child abuse, and mental illness than the general population (*Access Creates Opportunity: The Deaf in California*).

Because of the historic difficulties facing deaf and hard-of-hearing students, the California Deaf Education Coalition, a unique coalition of the deaf and hard-of-hearing stakeholders, professionals, and parents, was created. This group was instrumental in securing passage in 1994 of Assembly Bill 1836, often characterized as the "Deaf Child's Bill of Rights." Authored by then-Assemblywoman Delaine Eastin, this historic legislation recognized the unique communication needs of these children and the importance of viable program options. California *Education Code* Section 56000.5 (b)(10) specifically calls for the development of regional programs for deaf and hard-of-hearing students.

In 1996, as a result of the California Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 55, the California Department of Education submitted to the Legislature the report titled *Regionalization for Students with Low Incidence Disabilities: A Report on the Impact and Effectiveness of Regionalization and Recommendations for Necessary Changes in the Current Service Delivery System.* The report concluded that existing regionalized programs were educationally effective and saved money, and it recommended that legislation be enacted to mandate statewide regionalization of specialized resources and programs for students with low-incidence disabilities. (See Appendix B.)

In 1997 the California Legislature passed Assembly Bill 602, which established a new funding mechanism for special education and specifically recognized "an areawide approach to service delivery" as a "guiding principle" of the funding change.

That same year the United States Congress reauthorized the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and formally required that the individualized education program (IEP) team consider the "direct communication needs" of deaf and hard-of-hearing children, including "direct communication with peers and professional personnel in the child's language and communication mode" and "direct instruction in the child's language and communication mode" (20 *U.S. Code* Section 1414 [d][3][B][iv]).

Of equal importance, IDEA specifically recognizes the significance of regional programs and California's duty to provide them. Section 1413 (h)(1) states:

> (1) In general
>
> A State educational agency *shall* (emphasis added) use the payments that would otherwise have been available to a local educational agency . . . to provide special education and related services directly to children with disabilities residing in the area served by that local agency . . . if the State educational agency determines that the local education agency . . .
>
> (B) is unable to establish and maintain programs of free appropriate public education . . .
>
> (C) is unable or unwilling to be consolidated with one or more local educational agencies in order to establish and maintain such programs; or
>
> (D) has one or more children with disabilities who can best be served by a regional or State program or service-delivery system designed to meet the needs of such children.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

In other words, California has a clear and direct duty to develop regional programs.

An unmistakable thread runs through these reports, policies, and laws: deaf and hard-of-hearing children have been denied—but nonetheless need—a quality, communication-based education. This schooling must include a critical mass of language and age peers, language proficient teachers and other professionals, administrators who are certificated and knowledgeable in deaf and hard-of-hearing education, and appropriate support services.

The task force refers to these many reports, recommendations, and laws because of its very deep concern that there has been a substantial inability—for far too many years—to convert the best thinking of parents, professionals, deaf and hard-of-hearing adults, and legislators into concrete action.

It is precisely because of this gap between words and action that the California Deaf Education Coalition held a statewide Deaf Education Summit in October 1995. Parents, professionals, and members of the deaf and hard-of-hearing community provided wide-ranging input regarding the status of deaf and hard-of-hearing education in California. As a result of the summit, the coalition developed *An Innovative Approach for Critical Change* and submitted it to CDE.

In response, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Delaine Eastin formed the California Deaf and Hard-of-hearing Education Advisory Task Force in October 1996 with the explicit charge to:

> [G]enerate thoughtful and powerful recommendations so that we improve the quality of education afforded to all deaf and hard-of-hearing students throughout California.

Every deaf and hard-of-hearing child is entitled to an education in which the child's language and communication mode is acknowledged, respected, assessed, developed, and fully utilized. Therefore, this task force strongly recommends that a new educational delivery system for deaf and hard-of-hearing students must be implemented in California. Such a system needs to have a true, full continuum of placement and service options for deaf and hard-of-hearing children, including:

- Inclusion or mainstreaming in the neighborhood school;
- Co-enrollment classes;
- Special day classes;
- State special schools; and
- Regionalized programs providing the specialized services, staff, and communication access required for many deaf and hard-of-hearing children.
- Nonpublic programs

The task force believes that the establishment of a regionalized delivery system will strengthen existing programs while significantly enhancing communication-based program options for deaf and hard-of-hearing students. California has a unique opportunity to develop a more appropriate and effective educational system for deaf and hard-of-hearing children and to show its citizens and the rest of the nation that cost-efficient reform is possible. The task force urges California to commit the necessary resources and effort to ensure that deaf and hard-of-hearing children have appropriate communication access, placements, instruction, and services.

Deaf and hard-of-hearing children still await the convergence of words and action, the translation of promise into deed. To serve these students well is to enrich their lives. Ultimately, we are addressing fundamental human rights, which are of inestimable value.

It is time for California to act.

Recommendations

I California should implement a coordinated, statewide, regional education delivery system for deaf and hard-of-hearing students.

A REGIONAL educational system for deaf and hard-of-hearing children will provide students with a communication-based, quality education. A regionalized system means that each deaf or hard-of-hearing child will have access to *all* placement options, including placement in the neighborhood school, co-enrollment classes, special day classes, state special schools, regional programs, and nonpublic programs. A regionalized system will not reduce current placement options, nor are the new delivery system and the continuation of current programs incompatible. The task force recognizes the importance of a full continuum of placement options (including the neighborhood classroom and the state special schools) and that an individual's needs should always determine program and placement decisions.

A regionalized system will unite students within the region, providing a critical mass of language peers. The system will include appropriately trained administrative and professional personnel; better utilize scarce resources; and encourage comprehensive, communication-based academic, career, and vocational programs. Ultimately, this delivery system will increase, rather than diminish, options for deaf and hard-of-hearing students. (See page 6 for a description of the Orange County Department of Education's regionalized program.)

Orange County Department of Education
Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Program

The Orange County Department of Education has accepted the challenge of providing quality education for deaf and hard-of-hearing students, grades six through twelve. Guaranteed access to a regionalized setting provides many educational, social, and emotional advantages for students.

The Orange County Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Program is located within the Irvine Unified School District at Deerfield Elementary School, Venado Middle School, and University High School in Irvine; the program serves over 170 deaf students living in 28 school districts throughout Orange County. Students have the opportunity to be mainstreamed in general education classes with their hearing peers or to spend most of their day in special classes designed for deaf and hard-of-hearing students.

Without Orange County's regional effort, each of the 28 school districts would be responsible for creating small, individual deaf programs and would compete for a limited number of specialists, including skilled sign language interpreters; speech and language therapists; psychologists; counselors; and audiologists who are trained in deaf education. However, by pooling their economic resources into one regionalized effort, the districts provide deaf and hard-of-hearing students and their families with a richer, more effective, comprehensive educational environment.

The advantages of regionalized programming are many. Having 110 deaf students at the high school and 60 students in grades six through eight provides opportunities for Orange County deaf students to feel pride in themselves as members of the community as well as to feel comfortable and knowledgeable in working and socializing with their peers.

In fact, deaf and hard-of-hearing students feel that their school provides them with the best of both worlds. For example, there are enough deaf students to compose a junior National Association of the Deaf chapter, play in the Deaf Basketball Tournament, compete in the Deaf Academic Bowl, and organize special deaf assemblies. In addition, students can participate in extracurricular activities, varsity sports, and student government with their peers. This kind of programming provides young people with self-esteem and pride in their deafness along with the confidence, experience, and knowledge that they can accomplish anything a hearing student can.

Regional educational programs can prevent unnecessary duplication of essential support services. With the monies collected and monitored by the Orange County Department of Education as a consortium for the districts, the regional deaf program is staffed with a full-time administrator, program psychologist, guidance counselor, career education specialist, mainstream resource teacher, audiologist, three speech therapists, 17 full-time interpreters, 17 teachers (six of whom are deaf), and 17 instructional assistants. All of these support personnel are trained in deaf education and are required to sign fluently. This type of program helps to establish continuity in the curriculum and produces educational programming that has led to academic scores that average two to three years better than the national norms across the curriculum.

The Orange County Department of Education Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Program has been recognized as a model of regionalized programming nationwide. Colleges such as Gallaudet University, National Technical Institute of the Deaf, and California State University at Northridge come to recruit students at University High School several times annually. The graduating class of 1997 was composed of 28 deaf and hard-of-hearing students. Seven of these students are currently attending four-year universities, 17 are attending community colleges, and four are enrolled in vocational training programs or are employed.

Some county offices, such as Sonoma, have researched the regional education concept in Orange County and are already in the process of creating similar programs to provide parents and students with a wider range of viable educational program options. For more information, contact Jon Levy, Principal, University High School, at (949) 854-4785 or TDD (949) 854-7867.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

A California should enact legislation to mandate regionalized programs.

Legislation should be enacted to establish regionalized programs for deaf and hard-of-hearing students consistent with *Education Code* Section 56000.5(b)(10), which states:

> Given their unique communication needs, hard-of-hearing and deaf children would benefit from the development and implementation of regional programs for children with low-incidence disabilities.

The legislation should require county superintendents of schools to develop and submit written plans for regionalization. The California Department of Education (CDE) should review and approve all submitted plans and ensure that regionalization is implemented. Existing regionalized programs should be identified to develop best practices and models of regionalization for other areas.

B The county superintendent of schools should develop the regionalization plan.

The county superintendent of schools is the critical educational leader in developing a regionalization plan. This responsibility, however, does not diminish the role of the special education local plan areas (SELPAs) or local educational agencies, which should be included by the county superintendent in planning regionalization.

The geographic definition of a region and the number and location of programs and services within it would be determined by a regional plan, taking into account the number and location of deaf and hard-of-hearing students and the best ways in which to provide a critical mass and the continuum of placement options. The county superintendent should establish an administrative structure to govern the region and, within one year, submit to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction a description of the structure, a written regional plan (see Recommendation II), and an implementation plan documenting the dates by which the regional program will initiate services.

The administrative structure will include these elements:

- A governance structure and any necessary administrative support to implement the plan, such as through joint powers agreements or other contractual agreements. In any one region one or more county offices of education might be directly involved in regionalization, with one office selected as the administrative agency for the entire region. Among regions there could be differences in governance structure. However, the governance structure should address issues of relationships among the county offices of education, SELPAs, and school districts, including how they effectively use resources.
- A regional coordinator hired by the administering county office of education. This coordinator will have an appropriate California administrator's credential and a credential in deaf and hard-of-hearing education. The coordinator will oversee the region's programs for deaf and hard-of-hearing students, budget, staffing, and services.
- Program managers, as necessary at program sites, who are appropriately credentialed, knowledgeable, and experienced in educating deaf and hard-of-hearing students and who are responsible for all student individualized education programs (IEPs).
- An advisory council comprised of parents, deaf and hard-of-hearing consumers, students, staff credentialed in deaf and hard-of-hearing education, general education teachers serving deaf and hard-of-hearing children, administrators, and support services staff.

C The California Department of Education must provide leadership, technical assistance, and support by qualified, knowledgeable, professional staff.

- CDE should establish the Office of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Education as a

permanent unit within CDE, with sufficient staff to ensure that it can implement the responsibilities described in this report:

- The office, established with a historic understanding of deaf and hard-of-hearing education and with trained and experienced staff, has a fundamental leadership role to play in creating a communication-based, regionalized education system. This system would require that all programs, services, and placement options are available, including general education classrooms, special day classes, state special schools, regionalized programs, and nonpublic school placements.
- The office must work with others within CDE and throughout California to implement an effective and cost-efficient regionalized system for deaf and hard-of-hearing students. This office must ensure that the fundamental rights of deaf and hard-of-hearing children, as mandated in federal and state law, particularly California *Education Code* sections 56000.5(b) and 56340(e) and federal statute 20 *U.S. Code* Section 1414(d)(2)(b)(iv), are protected. These responsibilities are consistent with the state's oversight responsibilities for all general and special education programs.
- Once the communication-based,[2] regionalized system is established, the office will be responsible for overseeing the regionalized programs, while the day-to-day responsibilities for these programs will remain with the appropriate educational agencies.
- Along with the state special schools and the regional programs, the Office of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Education will also serve as a clearinghouse for current research, best practices, model programs, innovative instructional methods, and other information related to providing quality education for deaf and hard-of-hearing students.

- CDE should ensure the establishment of advisory councils:
  - Each region should create an advisory council, consisting of parents, deaf and hard-of-hearing community representatives, representatives from the larger community, deaf and hard-of-hearing students, credentialed staff in deaf and hard-of-hearing education, and other appropriate persons. The advisory councils will participate in developing parent education programs, have designated representatives involved in selecting and evaluating the regional coordinator, and generally advise regions regarding all aspects of the regional delivery system. CDE will work with regions to include regional advisory council members on existing local community advisory committees and individual school-site councils.
  - CDE should also establish its own state advisory council consisting of representatives from each of the regional advisory councils, the state special schools, and additional members as needed to ensure a balanced representation of constituencies.

- CDE, collaborating with the regions, should create an interagency agreement with the Department of Rehabilitation to provide vocational and technical training programs for deaf and hard-of-hearing students:
  - CDE should work with the Department of Rehabilitation to identify existing effective vocational and technical programs, such as regional occupational programs and community colleges serving deaf and

[2] Consistent with California *Education Code* Section 56000.5, the task force recognizes and respects that *communication* includes all languages, including English and American Sign Language, and all modalities, such as speech, tactile communication, and speech accompanied by a visual sign system.

hard-of-hearing students. CDE will collaborate with SELPAs and county offices of education to create vocational and technical programs based on existing model programs.

- CDE will also establish service delivery standards for vocational and technical programs serving deaf and hard-of-hearing students, particularly in regard to communication access and related services. To ensure that deaf and hard-of-hearing students have full access to all training and materials, CDE should provide technical training to existing vocational and technical program staff regarding the unique communication needs of deaf and hard-of-hearing students.

- The name of the State Special Schools and Services Division should be changed to reflect the responsibility for statewide coordination of programs for deaf and hard-of-hearing students:
  - To foster a statewide coordination of programs for deaf and hard-of-hearing children, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction established a unit for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Education, located in CDE's State Special Schools and Services Division. This division now administers the Office of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Education, the diagnostic centers, the Clearinghouse for Specialized Media and Technology, and the state special schools. To reflect this expanded responsibility, the division's name should be changed to the Division of State Special Schools, Specialized Services, and Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Programs. The division should ensure coordination between the Office of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Education and the state special schools.

- The state special schools—the California School for the Deaf, Fremont (CSDF); California School for the Deaf, Riverside (CSDR); and California School for the Blind (CSB)—should continue to function as options within the continuum of programs for deaf and hard-of-hearing and deaf-blind students by offering comprehensive programs for day and residential students who meet the state special schools' admission criteria. Given appropriate resources, the schools should:
  - Expand their diagnostic services in both the residential and home school settings to students who are enrolled in local school districts.
  - Expand their roles in providing technical assistance, consultation and training services, and educational resources in collaboration with county offices of education and regionalized programs serving deaf and hard-of-hearing and deaf-blind students.

(D) The California State Board of Education should adopt a policy emphasizing the central role of communication in the development and education of deaf and hard-of-hearing children.

The State Board should adopt a clear statement of the underlying philosophy that deaf and hard-of-hearing children are entitled to an education in which their communication needs—whether visual, oral/aural, or tactile—are central to an appropriate education. This recommendation can be implemented at once and represents an important, positive initial step in creating a regionalized system of education for deaf and hard-of-hearing children. The statement should address the following broad parameters:

- Communication is the conceptual starting point for any educational system that serves deaf and hard-of-hearing children, a principle consistent with California *Education Code* Section 56000.5 and coequal with other legal mandates.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

- The regionalized system should include:
  - Appropriate, early, and ongoing **communication assessment;**
  - Appropriate, early, and ongoing **communication development;** and
  - **Communication access,** which means a critical mass of age and language peers and staff proficient in the child's mode of communication.

The statement should also:

- Recognize the unique nature of hearing loss.
- Recognize the unique cultural and linguistic needs of deaf children.
- Ensure that each program provides communication-related services (including qualified sign and oral interpreters, cued speech transliteration, electronic note taking, and assistive listening devices) and extracurricular activities based on guidelines established with the programs.
- Ensure that English-language acquisition is recognized as the paramount factor in the design of programs, curricula, materials, assessment instruments, and professional and parent training.
- Ensure the recognition of American Sign Language (ASL) as a distinct language of deaf people and the development of standards for teaching it as a language.
- Encourage the adoption of ASL as a language satisfying the high school graduation requirement for a foreign language.
- Ensure that sign language instruction is provided on a continuous basis to deaf students, their parents, siblings, other family members, and peers. When teaching sign language to non-English-speaking parents, instruction should be provided in the parents' primary language.
- Ensure that the communication and language needs of deaf and hard-of-hearing students who rely on auditory verbal or oral/aural language are fully met.
- Ensure, as required by law, that the IEP team determines placement based on the child's identified communication needs.

E An interagency, multidisciplinary task force should be established immediately to address the lack of services and programs serving deaf and hard-of-hearing students who have multiple handicaps.

As noted in the introduction, the Commission on Education of the Deaf reported that the present status of education of deaf persons in the United States is unsatisfactory—"unacceptably so." The pain and frustration of deaf and hard-of-hearing children with multiple disabilities, including severe emotional disturbances and developmental disabilities, are exponentially "unsatisfactory." An interagency task force should be formed, including the Department of Health Services (DHS) and the Department of Developmental Disabilities, to address this inadequacy.

The tragedy is that this situation has existed for far too long. As early as 1983 CDE addressed the needs of one of these groups in its report *Emotionally Disturbed Hearing-Impaired Students in California: Their Needs, Assessment Procedures, and Current Program Effectiveness.* The report concluded that there were programs and services available for deaf and hard-of-hearing children who also had an emotional disturbance, but "not necessarily **appropriate** services." The report recommended a "broader spectrum of services. . . ." However, 15 years later, no action has been taken on this important report. There continues to be a lack of appropriate programs and services for deaf and hard-of-hearing students with multiple disabilities. Factors that contribute to this problem are:

- Lack of trained professionals to meet these students' needs
- Lack of clarity among professionals regarding the primary handicap of these students

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

- Misunderstanding surrounding placement decisions, leading to feelings of nonacceptance and discrimination
- Lack of adequate funding for appropriate programs

Appropriate programming for deaf and hard-of-hearing students with multiple disabilities should be built upon the following beliefs:

- These students have a right to equal access to quality programs and services.
- Professionals with expertise not only in the area of deaf and hard-of-hearing education but also in areas of suspected or identified disabilities are needed to collaboratively serve these students.
- Deaf and hard-of-hearing teacher training programs must train professionals to work with students with special needs.
- Regional plans must provide programs and services for deaf and hard-of-hearing students with special needs.

F An early identification and referral system should be established.

CDE, along with other appropriate agencies, should establish a standardized system of early identification and referral. This collaboration is crucial to the early development of communication and deaf and hard-of-hearing children's readiness for school. Deaf and hard-of-hearing children require intensive, accessible language input as every child needs to develop linguistic competence during the critical years from birth to three. Research has shown that there is a direct correlation between early access to quality language and communication and the deaf and hard-of-hearing child's success in language development.

The four broad goals of the identification and referral system are:

- Mandatory universal screening of all newborns for hearing loss
- Immediate parent referral to appropriate educational and noneducational agencies serving deaf and hard-of-hearing children
- Information and support services for deaf and hard-of-hearing children upon identification
- A formal and effective connection between the child and the family and individuals who have expertise regarding hearing loss and its communication consequences

To achieve these goals, CDE should collaborate with DHS and other appropriate local, state, federal, and private agencies to develop guidelines and procedures for:

- Providing universal hearing screening for each live birth
- Providing referrals to health and appropriate educational agencies to ensure that newborns and infants are appropriately served
- Disseminating information to parents, educators, and the medical community about hearing loss, communication, and language development
- Providing direct services to deaf and hard-of-hearing children to ensure appropriate and effective communication and language development from birth
- Assisting families and the individual family service plan team in developing appropriate individual family service plans, which address each child's unique communication and education needs
- Collaborating among CDE, DHS, and other agencies to recognize the need for, and the impact of, early communication on deaf and hard-of-hearing students' educational growth
- Collaborating with existing social service agencies and state and local parent organizations serving deaf and hard-of-hearing children to provide parent support and education
- Developing interagency agreements to ensure implementation of these early intervention requirements

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

II Criteria for quality deaf and hard-of-hearing programs should be implemented.

CDE should require that each county superintendent of schools identify the necessary resources and timelines to implement the following program criteria when the regional plan is developed. The county superintendent of schools should ensure that all regional programs contain or provide access to these components:

- A full continuum of communication options for deaf and hard-of-hearing children, including auditory-verbal, oral/aural, spoken English in combination with sign language, American Sign Language, cued speech, and tactile communication.
- Access to a full continuum of placement, program, and service options in the region to serve deaf and hard-of-hearing students more effectively, including deaf and hard-of-hearing students with special needs. The continuum should include, but not be limited to:
  - Regional programs, which provide the critical mass of age- and language-appropriate peers, opportunities for direct instruction and communication with staff and peers, personnel, and services
  - State special schools for the deaf
  - General education placements with the necessary related and support services, such as itinerant teachers credentialed in deaf and hard-of-hearing education, interpreters, and assistive listening technology
  - Special day classes and resource specialist programs, as required by federal and state law, which may include reverse mainstreaming, partial mainstreaming, and team teaching opportunities
  - Nonpublic schools, home instruction, hospital instruction, and institutions required by federal and state law to meet the needs of students with multiple disabilities
- A communication policy as described in *Recommendation I.D* of this report (see page 9).
- Core and specialized curriculum, appropriate procedures, and facilities, including:
  - Ongoing language development as a central part of the daily program
  - Access to the core curriculum with appropriate accommodations and modifications
  - Specialized curriculum as needed
  - Necessary facilities that are acoustically and visually appropriate
  - Procedures for communication between and, as appropriate, transition among programs, educational levels, schools, and classes
  - Deaf studies curriculum
- Appropriate assessments by trained multidisciplinary assessment team members who are knowledgeable and experienced in educating and assessing deaf and hard-of-hearing students. Such assessments should be completed in a timely and appropriate manner, which includes an early and timely assessment of communication needs as well as academic, social, linguistic, emotional, physical, vocational, and other unique needs.
- A full range of related services available in all placement and program options, which are to be provided by an individual who

holds an appropriate credential, who is fully competent to provide the specific services, and who has training, experience, and proficient communication skills for serving deaf and hard-of-hearing students.

- Designated instruction and services as defined in the California *Education Code*, including, but not limited to:
  - Speech therapy, speech reading, and auditory training
  - Instruction in oral, sign, and written language
  - Adaptation of curricula, methods, media, and the environment to facilitate the learning process
  - Interpreters (oral and sign), cued speech, note takers, and real-time captionists
  - Audiological services and assistive listening devices
  - Specialized driver training instruction
  - Psychological services
  - Specially designed vocational education and career development
  - Recreation services and extracurricular opportunities
  - Access to technology that enhances communication, such as the use of the Internet for distance learning, videophones, and teleconferencing
- Vocational programs and career and transition services appropriate for deaf and hard-of-hearing students.
- Specialized services and equipment, including interpreters, note takers, electronic note taking, assistive listening devices, televisions with captioning capability, captioned videos, teletypewriters (TTYs), and amplified telephones, as appropriate, at every site where deaf and hard-of-hearing programs exist.
- Services such as transportation, parent training and assistance, and extracurricular services, including social and leadership opportunities.
- Appropriately trained, certified, and credentialed teachers and other staff, including instructional aides and educational interpreters, who fully understand the communication and language needs of deaf and hard-of-hearing children and who can communicate directly and proficiently with those children.
- Staff who reflect the students' ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds.
- Class size appropriate to the age and the needs of deaf and hard-of-hearing students. When providing programs for deaf and hard-of-hearing students, class size may have to be modified to accommodate other service delivery considerations, such as team teaching or mainstreaming. Class size guidelines become necessary when the composition of the deaf and hard-of-hearing peer group is influenced by multiage factors and/or additional handicapping conditions that dictate the need for a unique classroom structure. The class sizes for special day class placements provided by the California Guidelines for Hearing Impaired Individuals (1986) are:
  - Infant—four students per class if school based
  - Preschool—four to six students per class
  - Multihandicapped—four to six students per class
  - Elementary (ages five to nine)—four to eight students per class
  - Elementary (over nine years old)—six to eight students per class
  - Secondary—eight to ten students per class

While these are existing guidelines, there is flexibility to vary class size appropriately to meet the needs of deaf and hard-of-hearing students. In addition, "students per class" as used in these guidelines should be changed to reflect the current allocation system of "students per adult."

- Caseloads for itinerant teachers and other support personnel (e.g., interpreters and speech and language therapists) at levels that facilitate effective teaching and learning and that consider the distance traveled and number of sites served.
- Training for general education staff and students in deaf culture and disability awareness regarding hard-of-hearing students at school sites where deaf and hard-of-hearing children are placed.
- Specialized preservice and in-service training and technical assistance to both general education and special education staff providing services to deaf and hard-of-hearing students.
- Access to deaf and hard-of-hearing role models.
- Collaboration with institutions of higher education, businesses, and community agencies.

The task force recognizes that existing programs may meet these requirements, and these programs should serve as models of regionalization.

III Programs serving deaf and hard-of-hearing children should have standards, assessment, and accountability for student achievement.

EACH program serving deaf and hard-of-hearing children should implement content and performance standards; assessment procedures; and a comprehensive, multiyear, programwide accountability plan. CDE should:

- Coordinate the implementation of rigorous content and performance standards in all areas of instruction, including communication, vocational and career preparation, and transition readiness, consistent with California's curriculum frameworks and content standards.
- Coordinate the development and implementation of assessment procedures at each program site to provide valid and reliable information about (1) the achievement of every student according to established standards; and (2) the steps necessary to increase levels of student achievement over time.
- Develop, implement, and monitor standards for addressing a child's initial and ongoing communication needs and language and literacy skills, including expressive and receptive language skills, the student's degree of hearing loss, and the student's ability to use residual hearing.
- Develop and implement procedures for modifying standards and/or assessment procedures, within the context of an IEP, to meet the educational needs of deaf or hard-of-hearing students who have special needs or multiple disabilities.
- Determine the types of information to be gathered and reported to school staff, students, parents, administrators, the advisory council, CDE, and the community, including, but not limited to:
  - Types and location of programs in the region
  - Number of deaf and hard-of-hearing children in the program
  - Current levels of achievement based on multiple assessment measures
  - Status of transition planning and IEP goals
  - Levels of communication proficiency, including expressive and receptive spoken and written English and sign language skills
  - Follow-up information after high school graduation (e.g., college enrollment, degrees received from college, and employment)
- Implement, within each region, a joint accreditation process with the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) and the Conference of Educational Administrators Serving the Deaf (CEASD).
- Develop procedures by which the coordinated compliance review and the program guidelines review are coordinated with the WASC accreditation process and the Council on Education of the Deaf standards.
- Require accountability plans that reflect student achievement, program improvement, and timelines for improving student achievement, including target achievement levels and intervention techniques.
- Require regions to report student achievement results and progress annually.
- Conduct a fiscal audit and program quality review of each region every other year.
- Establish a management information system to aggregate, analyze, and report accountability information.

IV The California Department of Education, institutions of higher education, the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, and other agencies should collaborate to recruit and train staff.

A CDE should have a central role in ensuring appropriate professional training for new and current staff.

The quality of educational programs serving deaf and hard-of-hearing students depends upon the specialized knowledge, skills, and attributes of all administrators; teachers; educational interpreters; certificated personnel; support service personnel; psychologists; audiologists; speech and language specialists; and other staff, including note takers and real-time captionists. Unfortunately, a severe shortage exists of qualified teachers and other staff to serve deaf and hard-of-hearing children. Recruitment and preservice and in-service training are essential to alleviating this problem and providing quality staff.

CDE should:

- Collaborate with institutions of higher education (IHEs), the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC), and other agencies to develop and implement professional standards and evaluation procedures for all individuals serving deaf or hard-of-hearing students. Standards should include the skills required to meet the unique educational, communication, and diverse multicultural needs of deaf and hard-of-hearing students and deaf and hard-of-hearing students with multiple disabilities and/or severe emotional problems.
- Collaborate with IHEs to ensure that these standards are a core part of professional preparation and graduation requirements. The teacher preparation programs should have deaf and hard-of-hearing education certification standards as stringent as the standards set by the appropriate professional organizations, including the Council on Education of the Deaf and state certification agencies.
- Work with teacher preparation programs to ensure that personnel are knowledgeable about all modes and languages used by deaf and hard-of-hearing students while retaining an objective, philosophically neutral position on specific modes and languages.
- Collaborate with IHEs to develop leadership training programs to ensure that administrators in educational programs for deaf and hard-of-hearing students are appropriately prepared, trained, and evaluated.
- Collaborate with CCTC to certify teachers and other professionals to ensure they are qualified according to standards set by the Council on Education of the Deaf and state certification agencies.
- Collaborate with IHEs to attract greater numbers of qualified individuals, including deaf and hard-of-hearing and ethnically diverse individuals, to the field of deaf and hard-of-hearing education. CDE should also collaborate with other state agencies, such as the Department of Rehabilitation, and the federal government to develop training and recruitment programs offering incentives to individuals, particularly deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals, who want to enter the field of deaf and hard-of-hearing education, educational interpreting, and related fields, such as school psychology.
- Work with consumers, professionals, and appropriate governmental entities to develop standards to ensure that interpreters

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

in educational settings and instructional aides are adequately prepared, trained, certificated, and evaluated; and establish a system of ongoing training and evaluation for all support staff.

- Support preservice and in-service training for general and special education classroom teachers and other certificated staff who serve deaf and hard-of-hearing students to enhance student achievement. The use of technology, such as distance learning, videoconferencing, and networking through computers, to enhance ongoing in-service opportunities and support teacher preparation programs should also be promoted.
- Support the recruitment of new teachers and preservice and in-service training and ongoing educational activities in:
  - Using and maintaining technology to enhance student achievement
  - Developing behavioral intervention skills
  - Serving deaf and hard-of-hearing students with special needs
  - Developing proficiency in signing skills
  - Identifying individual learning styles and appropriate adaptations for deaf and hard-of-hearing students
  - Other areas as identified through staff needs assessment surveys

B **Institutions of higher education and the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing should implement courses related to educating hard-of-hearing students.**

The identified number of hard-of-hearing children has increased during the past several years due to earlier detection, more accurate reporting, and the increased use of cochlear implants. These hard-of-hearing children are capable of developing, processing, and communicating primarily through an auditory-based system; and they should generally be in regular education classrooms with appropriate auditory management and other support services.

Distinguishing between students who are hard-of-hearing and students who are deaf is critical in prescribing, managing, and monitoring appropriate educational programs. Reducing the ambient noise levels of classrooms, using assistive listening devices and visual technology such as captioning, and teaching students to understand their hearing loss and be their own advocates are some ways to prevent and reduce communication barriers and other problems associated with hearing loss.

A great deal of information is currently available on the needs of hard-of-hearing children. Unfortunately, few training programs focus on disseminating this information. Administrators, educators, other school personnel, parents, and the hard-of-hearing students themselves need training regarding the unique needs of students who are hard-of-hearing.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

A system of parent and community education and involvement should be established.

PARENTS of deaf and hard-of-hearing children need access to information, support services, and training to help their children. Such information and training are essential: more than 90 percent of deaf and hard-of-hearing children have hearing parents, and historically these parents have had insufficient knowledge about hearing loss and/or communication development.

Parents need to be empowered to be full participants in the individual family service plan, the individualized education program (IEP), and the individual transition plan process as required under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Parent education is particularly important in a communication-based, regionalized education system.

Each region and program should have:

- Guidelines and procedures to ensure that appropriate information is provided to parents about hearing loss, communication development, and available services. All parent education materials must be in the primary languages used in the home.
- Ongoing parent support; access to support organizations; and parent training, including parents' rights and advocacy training and workshops on the importance of communication and language development, program options, and support services available for deaf and hard-of-hearing students from birth through age twenty-two. Parents are themselves invaluable resources and should be trained to assist other parents.
- Protections to ensure parents are coequal participants on the IEP team and in the education of deaf and hard-of-hearing students.
- IEP meetings in which informed parental choice regarding program determination and actual placement is given the highest possible value in all IEP decisions.
- Parent participation in the development of educational programming.
- Parent involvement, appropriate volunteer opportunities for parents, and opportunities to meet deaf and hard-of-hearing adults.
- Collaboration among district, regional, and state school programs to develop a parent support system.
- Use of available resources, including existing national, state, and local parent organizations for parents of deaf and hard-of-hearing children; community colleges; adult education programs; institutions of higher education; the state special schools; and other local programs to provide parent support systems.

VI The current funding system should be modified and provide sufficient resources for a quality education for deaf and hard-of-hearing students.

CALIFORNIA's Legislature has already recognized the importance of regionalization. In 1997 Assembly Bill 602, which changed special education funding in this state, was enacted. Section 2(b)(1) requires that:

> Allocations to special education local plan areas encourage and support an areawide approach to service delivery that incorporates collaborative administration and coordination of special education services within an area, allows for the tailoring of organizational structures to differing population densities and demographic attributes, and provides local flexibility for the planning and provision of special education services in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

Because deafness is low incidence, the geographic distribution of deaf and hard-of-hearing children significantly impacts local school programs and budgets. Of the approximately 550 local educational agencies (LEAs) with deaf and hard-of-hearing students in 1998, 406 had 10 or fewer deaf and hard-of-hearing students, and 45 LEAs had between 10 and 20 students. Furthermore, age distribution was generally equal, reducing the possibility of enough same-age peers in many districts. As a result, LEAs must either provide high-cost, low-ratio programs and services (i.e., one teacher to a small number of students or significant individual support services) or create large classes of students with significantly varying ages, cognitive levels, languages, and disabilities.

The task force understands that questions regarding regionalization costs are necessary. However, special education funding in California historically has been a complex process, making it difficult to analyze the per-pupil cost. Although the task force does not have the resources to compare the cost of current programs with the potential costs for future regionalized delivery systems, any comparison must recognize that current district costs often reflect the district's inability or unwillingness to provide a full range of required services, programs, and qualified staff. For example, there may not be a qualified sign or oral interpreter; therefore, the student is not provided one. There may not be a psychologist who knows anything about the unique communication and psychological needs of deaf and hard-of-hearing students, or there may not be a teacher qualified to work with deaf and hard-of-hearing students. Thus, the figures provided by many districts have a built-in "under cost."

In addition, there is the "cost of failure." This cost is not included in the "real" cost of the current educational system. However, it has a direct impact on both the state and deaf and hard-of-hearing students when these students become adults who rely more heavily on public assistance than does the general population.

Providing an effective educational delivery system will provide priceless educational opportunities for deaf and hard-of-hearing students.

Note: Included in Recommendation I is a description of the Orange County Department of Education's cost-effective, regionalized program (see page 6). Fifty-nine employees serve approximately 150 to 175 secondary-level deaf and hard-of-hearing students from 28 school districts. It is estimated that—without regionalization—comparable programs and services would require two to three times that number of employees.

A The new delivery system should be fully funded.

Full funding for a new delivery system is crucial. CDE should develop a fully funded model to deliver educational programs and services for deaf and hard-of-hearing children throughout the state that allows for:

- Funds to "follow the child," regardless of placement
- Fiscal allocations that encourage and support a regional approach to service delivery for deaf and hard-of-hearing programs and services
- Collaborative administration and coordination of special education services within an area
- Tailoring of organizational structures to differing population densities and demographic attributes
- Local flexibility in planning and providing regional services efficiently and cost effectively
- Fiscal allocations to support the state special schools' expanded services to local school districts
- A system of accountability and monitoring of funding

B Appropriate technology should be a part of all programs for deaf and hard-of-hearing students.

Resources should be provided to implement state-of-the-art technology, including system design; equipment and software acquisition; and training of staff, students, and parents. *Connect, Compute, and Compete*, the report of the California Education Technology Task Force, should be used as a guide.

- Every classroom and school library serving deaf and hard-of-hearing children should have the technology resources to create a learning environment focused on improving student achievement.
- Every school program should implement technology that enhances communication access for deaf and hard-of-hearing students, staff, and parents. The technology might include use of the Internet, distance learning, videophones, teleconferencing, electronic note taking, classroom FM amplification systems, televisions with captioning capability and captioned videos, assistive listening devices, and other forms of electronic communication.
- Every program serving deaf and hard-of-hearing students must provide resources to ensure the proficiency of staff, parents, and students in using and maintaining technology.
- Low Incidence Specialized Materials and Services Funds should be provided to support fully all programs serving deaf and hard-of-hearing students.

Call to Action

THE CALIFORNIA Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Education Advisory Task Force has found that this state's educational programs for deaf and hard-of-hearing children are, to a significant degree, ineffective. The problem is not one of individual failure but, rather, of basic systemic inadequacies: school districts do not have an understanding of the unique communication needs of deaf and hard-of-hearing children or the resources to meet those needs.

To continue along this same path is to perpetuate the isolation of deaf and hard-of-hearing children and to accept unacceptable education failure rates. To maintain the educational status quo is to set limits on deaf and hard-of-hearing children rather than to set them free to become healthy and productive citizens.

As this state recognizes the problem, the solution takes form. The task force believes that California has a historic opportunity to make a positive change for its deaf and hard-of-hearing children—and ultimately the society in which these children become adults.

Deaf and hard-of-hearing children require a regionalized educational delivery system that provides full communication access, with a continuum of placement, program, and service options; the necessary critical mass of peers; a professional and language-proficient staff; and a knowledgeable and experienced administrative support structure. This system will enable the students to go wherever their talents and energy take them.

The recommendations in this report have an urgency arising from the ongoing, systematic inadequacies that have existed for years in the education of deaf and hard-of-hearing students. The implementation of these recommendations cannot be delayed; therefore, this task force has provided a timeline for action (see p. 22). Although the timeline suggests time periods by which the recommendations should be accomplished, the California Department of Education is encouraged to take action as quickly as possible.

Everything that we are as individuals and as a society begins with the ability to communicate. Deaf and hard-of-hearing children in Cali-

fornia are entitled to communicate and to develop language. The work before us will take determination, but the outcome is of a value beyond calculation.

Even though the task force's initial job is finished, the real work has just begun. The task force requests that the California Department of Education:

- Reconvene the California Deaf and Hard-of-hearing Education Advisory Task Force, no later than six months after this report's submission, to inform the task force how and when its recommendations will be implemented. The task force will then meet as necessary to review the implementation plan and make any necessary additional recommendations to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction.
- Disseminate the task force's recommendations to all California local educational agencies and hold workshops for educators throughout the state to discuss the recommendations and begin work on long-term implementation.
- Ensure that the task force's recommendations become an integral part of the revision of CDE's *Program Guidelines for Hearing Impaired Individuals,* Assembly Bill 602, and the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.
- Publish the task force report and disseminate copies to parents and professionals in California and to national and state agencies and organizations responsible for deaf and hard-of-hearing education.
- Hold public workshops throughout the state to educate parents and others about Assembly Bill 1836 and the task force's recommendations.

Timeline for Implementation

Responsible Individual or Agency	*Within Three Months of Submission of Report*	*Within One Year of Submission of Report*	*Within Two Years of Submission of Report*
California Legislature	Enact legislation to mandate the establishment of regionalized programs.		Ensure full funding for the recommended programs. Provide resources to ensure that appropriate technology is a part of all programs for deaf and hard-of-hearing students. Fund the state special schools to allow for their expanded roles.
California State Board of Education	Adopt a policy statement emphasizing the central role of communication in the development and education of deaf and hard-of-hearing children.		

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Timeline for Implementation *(Continued)*

Responsible Individual or Agency	*Within Three Months of Submission of Report*	*Within One Year of Submission of Report*	*Within Two Years of Submission of Report*
California Department of Education	**E**stablish the Office of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Education as a permanent unit within the California Department of Education, with sufficient staff to ensure that it can implement all responsibilities described in this report. **C**hange the name of the State Special Schools and Services Division to reflect the responsibility for statewide coordination of programs for deaf and hard-of-hearing students. **E**nsure coordination between the Office of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Education and the state special schools. **E**stablish an interagency, multidisciplinary task force, including the California Departments of Health Services and Developmental Disabilities, to address the lack of services and programs serving deaf and hard-of-hearing students with multiple handicaps.	**A**ssist in the development of the regional system. **B**e responsible for oversight of the communication-based regionalized system in California. **E**stablish a system for early identification and referral. **R**ecognize the importance and continued availability of programs and services at the state special schools. **S**upport a system for parent education and involvement. **P**lay a central role in ensuring appropriate professional development for new and current staff. **E**xpand the state special schools' technical assistance and consultation services to the field and assessment services for students enrolled in local school districts.	**C**ollaborate with regions to create an interagency agreement between the Department of Rehabilitation and the Department of Education to provide vocational and technical training programs for deaf and hard-of-hearing students. **D**isseminate and monitor content and performance standards, assessment guidelines, and accountability standards and procedures for all deaf and hard-of-hearing programs in California. **C**ollaborate with institutions of higher education and the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing to implement courses related to educating hard-of-hearing students.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Timeline for Implementation *(Continued)*

Responsible Individual or Agency	*Within Three Months of Submission of Report*	*Within One Year of Submission of Report*	*Within Two Years of Submission of Report*
California Department of Education	**S**erve as a clearinghouse with the state special schools and the regional programs to provide information and assistance to parents, students, and professionals. **D**isseminate the task force's report to all California local educational agencies, hold workshops for educators throughout the state to discuss the recommendations, and begin work on long-term implementation. **P**ublish the task force's report and disseminate copies to parents and professionals in California and to national and state agencies and organizations responsible for deaf and hard-of-hearing education. **H**old public workshops throughout the state to educate parents and others about Assembly Bill 1836 and the task force's recommendations.	**E**nsure that the task force's recommendations become an integral part of the revision of the California Department of Education's *Program Guidelines for Hearing Impaired Individuals*, Assembly Bill 602, and the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. **R**econvene the task force, no later than six months after the submission of this report, to inform the task force how the recommendations will be implemented. The task force will meet as necessary to review the implementation plan and make any additional recommendations to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction.	
County Superintendent of Schools	**E**stablish regional advisory councils.	**D**evelop the regionalization plan.	**E**nsure that all regional programs contain or provide access to the quality program criteria described in this report.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Appendix A

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 55

Resolution Chapter 30

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 55—Relative to the provision of programs for pupils with low incidence disabilities.
(Filed with Secretary of State, May 12, 1992)

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 55, Farr. Special education: pupils with low incidence disabilities.

This measure would request the State Department of Education, in cooperation with the education agencies, organizations, and individuals, to develop regionalized pilot programs for pupils with low incidence disabilities and to conduct a study on the effectiveness of those programs. The measure would request that the study results be used to provide direction for any necessary statewide changes in the delivery system of educational programs and services for those pupils.

WHEREAS, In California there are over 20,000 students with highly specialized needs due to their low incidence disabilities; and

WHEREAS, Section 56026.5 of the Education Code defines "low incidence disability" as a severe handicapping condition with an expected incidence rate of less than 1 percent of the total statewide enrollment in kindergarten and grades 1 to 12, inclusive, and for purposes of this definition, severe handicapping conditions are hearing impairments, vision impairments, and severe orthopedic impairments, or any combination thereof; and

WHEREAS, It is difficult to serve pupils with low incidence disabilities because of the severity of their disabilities or the combination thereof, their low prevalence in the school population, their highly specialized needs, and the difficulty of providing adequate funding from state or local sources for specialized programs, services, materials, and equipment; and

WHEREAS, The costs to local education agencies to provide for the unique needs of these pupils often far exceed funding provided by the state; and

WHEREAS, Federal laws and regulations mandate a free appropriate public education for all individuals with disabilities and equal access to programs and services to meet their unique needs; and

WHEREAS, Pupils are to be educated in the least restrictive environment, which can be enhanced through regionalization; and

WHEREAS, The State of California has accepted the obligation to meet these requirements and, in addition, has mandated further requirements to address the unique educational needs of pupils with low incidence disabilities, which requirements include the development and implementation of program guidelines for each low incidence disability, the utilization of the program guidelines for technical assistance to parents, teachers, and administrators, and the monitoring of the implementation guidelines; and

WHEREAS, The current service delivery model is unable to meet the intent of the legislation as indicated in a recent statewide study of the quality of programs and services conducted as a result of concerns expressed by parents, educators, and organizations; and

WHEREAS, The study identified the following 10 major issues regarding the education of pupils with low incidence disabilities. The issues are:

(a) Administrators, particularly program supervisors, of low incidence programs need to be more knowledgeable about the unique educational needs of pupils with low incidence disabilities.

(b) Assessments of pupils with low incidence disabilities often are not comprehensive, and the results do not consistently relate to pupils, [and] individualized education programs and assessments are not always conducted by individuals who are appropriately trained and knowledgeable.

(c) There is a severe shortage of teachers and support personnel who are properly trained to work with low incidence pupils.

(d) A full range of program options and services is not always available for pupils with low incidence disabilities, particularly in rural areas, which limits the appropriate placement of pupils.

(e) Specialized in-service training for parents, teachers, and administrators is often not available.

(f) There is a need to further disseminate the low incidence guidelines, developed by the State Department of Education pursuant to Section 56136 of the Education Code, and to provide training in their implementation.

(g) The unique educational needs of infants and pre-school children with low incidence disabilities are often not being addressed adequately.

(h) There are inappropriate caseloads and class sizes in some low incidence programs and services.

(i) There is a need to address access to the core curriculum and specialized curriculum needs, including vocational education.

(j) There is a need to evaluate the effectiveness of low incidence programs, focusing on pupil outcomes, and

WHEREAS, The Legislature recognizes the need to provide an effective, efficient, and equitable statutory framework for the state's delivery system of educational services to meet the needs of its pupils with low incidence disabilities in the coming decade; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring, That the State Department of Education, in cooperation with educational agencies, organizations, and individuals, develop regionalized pilot programs for pupils with low incidence disabilities; and be it further

Resolved, That the State Department of Education conduct a study of the impact and effectiveness of the regionalized pilot programs at improving programs and services to pupils with low incidence disabilities by utilizing standards and criteria established in the program guidelines developed pursuant to Section 56136 of the Education Code; and be it further

Resolved, That the study of the implementation of regionalized pilot programs be used to provide direction for any necessary statewide changes in the delivery system of educational programs and services for pupils with low incidence disabilities; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit a copy of this resolution to the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Appendix B

Excerpt from *Regionalization for Students with Low Incidence Disabilities*

Section IV: Recommended Direction for Necessary Statewide Changes in the Current Service Delivery System

Recommendations were developed pursuant to ACR 55:

> *Resolved*, That the study of the implementation of regionalized pilot programs be used to provide direction for any necessary statewide changes in the delivery system of educational programs and services for pupils with low incidence disabilities;

Development of Recommended Changes

In order to determine the need for any changes in the current service delivery system, the pilot project directors, known as the Work Group, developed a list of constraints impeding their ability to plan, implement, and evaluate regionalized programs and services. Some of these constraints were local problems, but many were related to barriers within the current service delivery system. The work group also developed a list of recommendations relating to these constraints, including recommendations which would reduce or eliminate barriers within the current service delivery system. . . .

Identified Local Constraints and Barriers

A study was conducted to determine whether a sample of administrators of programs for students with low incidence disabilities throughout the state agreed or disagreed with these issues, constraints, and recommendations. . . .

The findings indicated that more than seventy percent (70%) of the administrators across the state believed regionalization would have positive benefit for students and their parents. Eighty percent (80%) of those surveyed believed that regionalization would improve collaboration among community agencies, reduce duplication of services, provide better training for parents and staff, and improve overall programming for students with low incidence disabilities. While seven of every ten administrators agreed regionalization would provide for a full range of program options and services for each student, nine in every ten administrators believed training and sharing innovative practices for educators would increase through regionalization.

Ongoing input regarding the issues, constraints, barriers, and recommendations was solicited at numerous conferences and regional meetings held throughout the state.

A draft report, including a draft list of recommendations, was submitted to the Task Force on Regionalization, representative of the parents, educators, consumers, and administrators of programs and services to students with low

Source: *Regionalization for Students with Low Incidence Disabilities: A Report on the Impact and Effectiveness of Regionalization and Recommendations for Necessary Changes in the Current Service Delivery System.* Sacramento: California Department of Education, 1996, pp. 19–22.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

incidence disabilities. The following list of recommendations for changes in the service delivery system was developed based upon input from the task force.

Abstract: Recommendations to the Legislature for Necessary Changes in the Current Service Delivery System

1. Enact legislation to mandate statewide regionalization in order to appropriately serve students with low incidence disabilities, support their families and staff who serve them.
2. By the year 2000, all agencies must enter into an agreed-upon local regionalization plan:
   - To be developed with input from specialists, parents, public/private agencies and other interested individuals and groups.
   - To address standards adopted by the California Department of Education and approved by the State Board of Education.
   - To address local needs and implement regional collaboration among all agencies serving students with low incidence disabilities.
3. The California Department of Education must provide leadership, technical assistance and support by qualified, knowledgeable, professional staff for each low incidence disability area.
4. Adequate funding must be provided to implement these recommendations.
5. In the initial three-year phase-in, a comprehensive cost/benefit analysis must be conducted to assist in the statewide phase-in by the year 2000.

Recommendations to the Legislature Regarding Regionalization Programs for Students with Low Incidence Disabilities

★ Recommendation 1. Regionalization Implemented

Enact legislation to mandate statewide regionalization of specialized services, resources, and programs in order to appropriately serve students with low incidence disabilities and to support their families and the staff that serve them.

★ Recommendation 2. Regional Plans

A. Purpose and Timelines

By the year 2000, agencies (including SELPAs, state special schools and centers, institutions of higher education, other public and private agencies) will be required to enter into an agreed-upon local regionalization plan to provide an appropriate education for all students with low incidence disabilities, from birth through 21 years.

B. Development of the Regional Plan

Regional plans will be developed with input from qualified, knowledgeable low incidence specialists, consumers, parents, and representatives of public and private agencies.

C. Address Standards

Regional plans must be developed to address standards developed by the California Department of Education and approved by the State Board of Education to include specific low incidence program standards as contained in the program guidelines and specific standards for low incidence regions.

These standards will include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Qualified, knowledgeable staff
- Personnel who are knowledgeable
- Assessment and instruction by appropriately credentialed, qualified staff
- Caseloads and class sizes
- Specialized staff development
- Parent involvement and education
- Core curriculum adaptation and specialized curriculum
- Critical mass for deaf and hard of hearing students
- Supportive services (technology, related services, designated instruction and services, etc.)
- Models for providing support sources for students in a variety of settings, including transition settings
- Processes for interagency collaboration
- Evaluation/accountability procedures based upon student outcomes

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

D. Components of the Regional Plan

Regional plans must address local needs and implement regional collaboration among all agencies serving the low incidence populations.

The following components must be included in the plan:

- A service delivery system to provide a full range of program options (from inclusive settings to the state schools) and services, including specialized media, materials and equipment.
- Appropriate identification, assessment, curriculum, and instruction by qualified personnel addressing the IEP/IFSP [individualized education program/individualized family service plan] of the student.
- Specialized preservice and inservice for all personnel, including parent education.
- A mechanism for interagency collaboration.
- A governance structure, which includes a regional advisory committee with representation of key county/SELPA policy makers.
- A budgetary process.

★ **Recommendation 3. State Leadership, Assistance, and Networking**

The California Department of Education must establish a system that provides leadership by qualified, knowledgeable professionals designated for each of the low incidence disability areas to provide:

- Technical assistance and leadership in special education.
- Technical assistance in the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of regional plans.
- Technical assistance and resources to facilitate statewide networking, resource sharing, and collaborative personnel development, including collaboration with IHEs to recruit and train sufficient qualified staff.
- An accountability system based on ongoing, rigorous research and evaluation of the effectiveness of regionalized programs for low incidence students to include measures of student learning in academic and nonacademic areas, measures of family satisfaction and parent education, and outcome measures for program graduates.
- Development of specialized curriculum and curricular access materials.

★ **Recommendation 4. Adequate Funding**

Adequate funding must be designed to implement these recommendations, including, but not limited to, the following areas:

- The excess costs of educating and transporting students with low incidence disabilities.
- Collaborative planning and development of the regional plan.
- Specialized staff development and follow-up, including parent education.
- Additional program specialists for each low incidence disability area.
- Specialized services as well as specialized books, materials, and equipment.

★ **Recommendation 5. Cost/Benefit Analysis and Accountability**

In the initial phase-in of regionalization of programs and services for students with low incidence disabilities, a comprehensive cost/benefit analysis must be conducted to determine:

(1) the actual costs of regionalized program implementation,

(2) the comparative effectiveness of various governance models,

(3) the benefits to students of implementing this new service delivery system, and,

(4) the measurable outcomes for each regionalization service delivery area.

Data from the initial regionalized programs will be used to assist in the statewide phase-in by the year 2000.

98-045 02 2524 372 6-99 1 500